



**Bucks County
Intermediate Unit**

**Bucks County Intermediate Unit
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For Immediate Release

Bucks IU Expands Their STEAM Education Program to Include a Fab Lab Center

Opening December 2021

November 4, 2021: Building on the success of their Mobile Fab Lab (Fabrication Laboratory), the Bucks County Intermediate Unit (Bucks IU) is excited to announce the opening of a **Fab Lab Center** in December 2021 for scheduled events and activities. Located at One Ivybrook Blvd., Suite 150, Warminster PA, the new Fab Lab Center will expand upon the STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) education programs the Mobile Fab Lab has been bringing to the students of Bucks County since the Fall of 2019. Educators, students, and industry stakeholders will now have a unique location specially designed to support a more in-depth engagement in STEAM learning.

STEAM education helps prepare students for tomorrow's workforce, which will require students to



Artist's rendering of the finished Fab Lab Center main education area. Additional spaces include a small meeting room and large education/meeting area.

be skilled in computer science and digital fabrication. The new Fab Lab Center provides yet another way of engaging and stimulating interest in the wide variety of STEAM future careers and opportunities.

- In Pennsylvania
 - Through 2026, 590,000 employment positions will be available and 9% of those will be STEAM jobs
 - Over the next 10 years, over 71% of all jobs will require computer science skills
- STEAM, health, and business majors generally earn the highest salaries
- Research shows that STEAM instruction offers benefits in a student's post-secondary career, even if that student does not pursue a STEAM career

Something for Everyone

The Fab Lab Center will be offering after school, weekend, and summer STEAM programs for **students** of all ages. After-school clubs will run for six-week sessions, meeting for 60-90 minutes once each week. Saturday programs will offer more-in depth learning opportunities, running for 3 hours. Clubs and programs will be offered for Engineering and Design, Coding with Robotics, Advanced Coding with Arduino, Community Service through Hydroponics, Making through Digital Fabrication, and much more!

The first STEAM Saturday will be held on December 11, 2021 and after-school clubs will launch in January 2022. Registration information will be posted on the Fab Lab Center website (www.BucksIU.org/FabLab/Events) with registration opening for both the STEAM Saturday and after-school clubs on November 8, 2021 at 8:00 am. On the Contact page of the site, those interested in being kept updated on Fab Lab programs can also join the mailing list.

Educators will find the new Fab Lab Center offers a place to engage in professional learning and training on a myriad of STEAM, digital fabrication, and computer science topics. For example, teachers can learn more about block coding and robots, use of digital design and fabrication tools like Tinkercad, and how to integrate all academic subject areas with STEAM. Teachers and administrators will also be able to look to the Fab Lab Center as a destination for educational, interactive school field trips.

For **community businesses**, the Fab Lab Center will be offering team building and retreat-style workshops.

Bucks IU Mobile Fab Lab

After receiving a PAsmart Advancing Grant two years ago from Governor Tom Wolf, the Bucks IU unveiled their Mobile Fab Lab. The Mobile Fab Lab, one of just 50 in the country, will continue to provide “STEAM Education on the Go,” by delivering digital fabrication and computer science learning experiences directly to the students of Bucks County. The program is facilitated by a Program Coordinator and brings with it all the technology, equipment, and supplies needed to deliver customized learning experiences to elementary and middle school students.

The Mobile Fab Lab is fully reserved this year for one-week residencies at schools throughout Bucks County.

Additionally, the Bucks IU’s specialty and summer STEAM programs with the Mobile Fab Lab continue to be in high demand. A second PAsmart Advancing Grant allowed the Bucks IU to collaborate with the Bucks County Free Libraries to provide FREE hands-on learning experiences for children at library locations over this past summer. Interest was so high for these summer programs that in just a few days, over 700 people registered for information. The Mobile Fab Lab will also continue to provide a variety of specialty learning programs for homeless shelters throughout the region as well as Saturday programs at locations throughout the Bucks County.

Supporting STEAM Education

The Bucks IU Fab Lab STEAM programs make learning fun and engaging for both children and adults. The Mobile Fab Lab and new Fab Lab Center encourage curiosity, creativity, artistic expression, collaboration, computational thinking, communication, problem solving, critical thinking, and design thinking. For more information, please go to www.BucksIU.org/FabLab.



The Bucks IU Mobile Fab Lab brings STEAM education to students through weeklong residencies at their schools. Children below are creating their own coding for a robotic Ozobot.



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ABOUT THE BUCKS COUNTY INTERMEDIATE UNIT (Bucks IU):

Celebrating 50 years of service! The Bucks IU supports improvements and advancements in student learning by providing exceptional educational programs, innovative professional development, and advanced business/technology services. We serve children ages birth to adult, public and private schools along with their staff and administrators, and the community of Bucks County. The Bucks IU is also the liaison between local schools and the Pennsylvania Department of Education. For more information, go to www.BucksIU.org or call 215-348-2940.